

libby

Briefing Paper on Libby Asbestos Superfund Site
June 22, 2010, Environment and Public Works Committee Meeting
June 21, 2010
DRAFT-DRAFT-DRAFT

Issues

Based on residents' complaints about a recent public concert on OU1 property, we have concerns about whether EPA is doing adequate public involvement and risk communication..

Please address these issues and overall pace of the OU1 cleanup and the Libby Cleanup as a whole.

Response

Public Involvement in Libby

- EPA has an extensive public involvement and outreach program in Libby.
 - The most effective element of the outreach program is the storefront EPA Information Center in the middle of downtown Libby. This field office is fully staffed during business hours. Through this outlet any citizen can obtain real-time information on individual properties and all of the informational and technical publications related to the Site as well as speak directly to the On-Site Project Manager. Averaging once every three months, EPA holds a Town Meeting on a specific Superfund topic or provides an update on the progress of the project in general – approximately an hour of these public meetings is set aside for questions and answers.
 - The Community Involvement Coordinator and/or On-Site Project Manager also attend and participate in monthly EPA briefings of the Lincoln County Commissioners, TAG meetings, CAG meetings, Operations & Maintenance (O&M) workshops, Chamber of Commerce and ARDNet, Board of Realtors luncheons, and other community group meetings such as the Healthy Communities Initiative, Rotary, Kiwanis, and Knights of Columbus. EPA was invited and participated in the Libby School District Master planning sessions. EPA personnel also have presented information on vermiculite identification and proper handling to students at the various schools in Libby.
 - An Environmental Resource Specialist (ERS) is on-call 24 hours a day to respond to emergency vermiculite spills or to assist residents who intend to work on property that still has vermiculite contained in place. This type of program will continue as part of O&M after EPA has completed its work in Lincoln County. This program has grown considerably and is very successful in helping address the Libby Citizen's concerns/needs. EPA

also sponsors formal classes necessary for state certification of local tradespersons in asbestos abatement and inspection.

- The Libby Site Team has also been working with the EPA Office of Children's Health regarding the communication of impacts to children's health from site contaminants.
- In the fall of 2009, EPA completed the public comment periods for proposed plans for Operable Units 1 & 2. Proposed plans were widely distributed to the community and public meetings were held to accept comments.
- In February 2010 EPA held its annual update public meeting.

General risk communication

- EPA is committed to informing all residents of Libby about the risks associated with Libby Asbestos including status of existing properties.
- In December 2009, EPA staff hosted a public meeting to discuss risk assessment activities and the Libby Action Plan.
- In February 2010 EPA staff hosted the annual update meeting at which Activity Based Sampling (ABS) results at Libby schools and ambient air improvements in the community were discussed.
- In addition, our toxicologist has participated in drop in sessions in the Libby office to answer the public's questions.
- RODs for OUs 1 & 2 issued May 2010 contained risk assessment information.
- On May 12, 2010, EPA submitted a report on "Known Health Effects, Baseline Risk Assessment Approach, and On-Going Cleanup Activities at the Libby Asbestos Site, Libby, Montana" to the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Risk communication for OU1 property

- The property is owned by the city.
- We have informed the city of the location of visible vermiculite, sample results, investigations, and areas of concern in OU1. The EPA attends city council meetings to help address any concerns or questions they may have.
- EPA did not specifically inform concert goers of risks associated with fenced off areas where visible vermiculite is present. The city does not regularly inform EPA of events scheduled for Riverside Park. The area where the concert occurred had been cleaned to acceptable levels per EPA protocols.
- EPA's estimated risk for intermittent park users, such as concert goers, is very low and within acceptable risk ranges (2×10^{-8} to 6×10^{-9} based on IRIS values).

Status of OU1 Cleanup

- The parking area has been expanded so that people can park in a place where potential exposure has been reduced by removal of visible vermiculite and capping.
- As an interim measure, EPA has placed 6 inches of clean fill over some areas of visible vermiculite which should reduce the likelihood of exposure until the OU1 cleanup is complete.
- Barrier fences have been installed to delineate areas of visible vermiculite.
- EPA has suggested that the city water down grassy areas in the park that are to be mowed so as to reduce dust.
- EPA coordinated with the City Administrator, city crew and the City's engineering firm to assist the city with the extension of a water line in OU1. EPA excavated two portions of the trench through suspected or known areas of contamination. Throughout the waterline project, EPA was available to provide oversight, respond to questions or offer additional assistance.
- Remedy has been selected (ROD, May 2010)
- We are working with the city to incorporate their plans for OU 1 with our cleanup plans.
- We are designing the remedial action.
- We expect that remedial action will begin this fall. Construction will be completed this fall. The post-construction risk assessment, including ABS and new toxicity factors, will be performed in 2011.

Overall pace of Libby Cleanup

- As of the end of 2009, 1262 residential properties have been remediated, 701,848 yd³ of soil, 14,785 yd³ of vermiculite attic insulation and 43,164 yd³ of debris have been removed. To date, response actions also have been taken at former processing facilities, school yards and waste piles.
- Residential property cleanups are underway for 2010. EPA plans on cleaning up approximately 100 properties in Libby and 50-100 properties in Troy this year.
- EPA will be performing ABS and Ambient Air studies again this summer.
- EPA completed the cleanup of the Libby Hotel this spring.